

Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program  
Stakeholder Group – March 16, 2015  
Meeting Summary

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**Stakeholder Group attendees**

- Warren Aakervik, Ballard Oil / Seattle Freight Advisory Board
- Glenn Avery, Queen Anne Community Council
- John Coney, Uptown Alliance
- Layne Cubell (for Robert Nellams), Seattle Center
- Matt Curry, South Lake Union Chamber of Commerce
- Jan Drago, Alliance for Pioneer Square
- Kyle Ducey, South Lake Union Community Council
- Hamilton Gardiner, West Seattle Chamber of Commerce
- Tom Graff, Belltown Business Association
- Morgan Littlefield-Adamack, CenturyLink Field and Event Center
- Marty Oppenheimer, South Park
- Susan Ranf, Seattle Mariners
- Rex Wardlaw (for Stephen DeForest), Magnolia Community Club

**Stakeholder Group members not in attendance**

- Jeff Aken, Cascade Bicycle Club
- Linda Anderson, Amalgamated Transit Union
- Michael Beranbaum, Joint Council of Teamsters No. 28
- Barb Chamberlain, Bicycle Alliance of Washington
- Howard Cohen, Seattle Hotel Association
- Alan Cornell, Nitze-Stagen
- Phil Fujii, Vulcan
- Jason Handaly, Sound Produce
- Ron Hildebrandt, Trident Seafoods at Interbay
- Tim Hillis, Charlie's Produce
- Ron Kieswether, Oak Harbor Freight Lines
- Bree Moore, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Lee Newgent, Washington Building Trades
- John Odland, MacMillan-Piper
- Vince O'Halloran, Puget Sound Ports Council & Sailors Union of the Pacific
- Tom Phillips, Compass Housing Alliance
- Lisa Quinn, Feet First
- Ed Shilley, Nucor Steel
- Pete Spalding, Delridge
- Herald Ugles, International Longshore and Warehouse Union/Pacific Maritime Association
- Eugene Wasserman, North Seattle Industrial Association
- Elaine Wine, Ballard

### **Agencies and staff in attendance**

- Todd Trepanier, Washington State Department of Transportation
- Matt Preedy, WSDOT
- Mike Merritt, Port of Seattle
- Stephanie Pure, King County Department of Transportation
- Angela Brady, Seattle Department of Transportation / Office of the Waterfront
- Eric Tweit, SDOT
- Rich Meredith, SDOT
- Jessica Murphy, SDOT

### **Agenda Item #1: Welcome and general updates**

Todd Trepanier welcomed everyone to the meeting and did introductions around the room. He discussed the request for a traffic signal at Harrison Street and SR 99 that came up at the last meeting. WSDOT and SDOT determined that a signal at that location would be a conflict point that could cause traffic to back up into the Battery Street Tunnel. Eric Tweit added that the city conducted a detailed analysis of a signal at Roy Street and SR 99 last year. The findings showed there would be back-ups into the Battery Street Tunnel, issues with limited sight distance and a high risk for collisions.

Todd gave a brief tolling update on the investment grade analysis underway, future bond authorization and the rate-setting process led by the Washington State Transportation Commission. Todd also reminded everyone about the semi-annual viaduct inspection closure on the weekend of March 28-29.

The Port of Seattle has previously committed funding to the Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program. Mike Merritt spoke about the Port Commission's approval for the first of two payments. The first payment will be \$120 million, no later than May 1, 2015.

### **Agenda Item #2 – Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program**

Matt Preedy noted that the lane closures on SR 99 planned to begin March 11 have been postponed. He also mentioned an upcoming traffic switch that is planned for July. Drivers will use a new bypass bridge on Aurora Avenue North to accommodate ongoing construction at the north portal.

Warren Aakervik: How long will it take for crews to switch traffic to this new bridge?

*Answer: The contractor still needs to determine how much time they need, although typically this can be completed over a long weekend.*

Matt Curry: Will the west side of Harrison Street (over the tunnel entrance) be reopened? Any access east or west on Harrison to the west of Aurora Avenue North would be desirable for the community sooner rather than later.

*Answer: Harrison Street probably will not reopen until the tunnel is complete. However, we will look into this to confirm.*

Matt Preedy gave an update on construction at the north and south tunnel portals, settlement near the access pit and repairs to the tunneling machine. At the south portal, crews are working on the roadways inside the tunnel and making progress on the cut-and-cover tunnel. Surveying efforts due to ground settlement detected in late November have shown that there was settlement prior to access pit construction, and while ground movement has normalized in the area, survey efforts have increased. Repair work continues at the access pit and the machine recently mined into the pit. Seattle Tunnel

Partners disassembled the front portion of the machine and is preparing to lift four parts from the pit. The contractor's schedule is to resume tunneling in August, which is an aggressive schedule.

Tom Graff: Is there any chance the viaduct will be demolished before the tunnel opens?

*Answer: We know the viaduct is vulnerable in a seismic event. We inspect the viaduct four times a year to ensure it remains safe for everyday use. It is unfortunate that the project has been delayed because the sooner we remove the viaduct, the sooner we eliminate a safety issue.*

Kyle Ducey: Will the tunnel be complete by August 2017?

*Answer: WSDOT receives an unmitigated schedule from STP every month. The contractor is finding ways to gain some time on the schedule, but it is difficult when they cannot yet say when the machine will resume mining again. When the machine resumes tunneling, we will want them to update the schedule.*

### **Agenda Item #3: Elliott Bay Seawall Project**

Jessica Murphy gave an update on the Elliott Bay Seawall Project which is now 48 percent complete. The first section south of Colman Dock is complete. Work has begun from Pike to Madison streets and all the milestones have been met so far. The next major milestone is reopening businesses on July 1. The project is on schedule to be completed June 2016.

Jan Drago: What will the waterfront look like on July 1 when more businesses reopen?

*Answer: We are still working on it. It is too early to predict, but we know that everything will be accessible for the summer as planned. Work will continue south of Madison.*

Susan Ranf: How successful are the businesses that have remained open during construction in the winter?

*Answer: By all accounts, businesses that remained open are doing well. We hear positive things from the businesses who are now preparing for a busy summer. Seattle Aquarium attendance increased in 2014.*

Marty Oppenheimer: What is the design life of the new seawall?

*Answer: The new seawall's design life will be 75 years, which is the standard design life for any of the structures that we build. The existing seawall has lasted 80 years.*

Warren Aakervik: Has seawall work in the south end of the waterfront been completed?

*Answer: Yes. The seawall work zone extended only to South Washington Street. Anything beyond that is work zone for the Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program. They are now occupying the work zone south of Yesler Way since our work between Yesler Way and South Washington Street is complete.*

Susan Ranf: Will parking be restored along the waterfront for the summer?

*Answer: Yes, we will restore as much parking as possible. We will begin to do outreach and make sure people know that before the summer.*

Marty Oppenheimer: What happens when the sheet pile wall erodes?

*Answer: The sheet pile walls are temporary. We chose to use it to help maintain stability of the fill and habitat benches. The sheet pile wall will be removed in many places and is not necessary for the final structure. This is a unique element of the project and has not really been done on many projects to date.*

Tom Graff: I heard that the water table in Pioneer Square can drop but may rebound. How do you manage the water table?

*Answer: It is critical to maintain a dry work space. This project requires managing different sources of water in different ways. We decided to use ground freezing to help stabilize the soil, which worked better for our project.*

*Todd Trepanier: The water underground is complicated. In Pioneer Square, there are three different aquifers at varying depths. STP excavated an access pit to repair the machine and must deal with the water table by pumping out the water around the pit. The Seawall Project has chosen to use ground freezing which has been effective for them. Our data shows that settlement has stabilized in the Pioneer Square area. Some types of soils may rebound after dewatering activities. WSDOT has increased surveying efforts to track what is happening. There may be some rebound when the dewatering wells are turned off.*

Jan Drago: This is a fascinating project. Are there any designated viewpoints for people interested in viewing construction?

*Answer: There are no designated viewpoints but the work is visible all along the waterfront path. Waterfront Park near the Seattle Aquarium is a popular spot. We also offer tours of the project and information is on our website.*

#### **Agenda Item #4 – Mercer Corridor Project**

Eric Tweit gave an update on the Mercer West construction. Recent work includes building a new retaining wall on the south side of Mercer Street between SR 99 and Dexter Avenue North. Upcoming construction will include some closures of the intersection of Roy Street and Dexter Avenue North and removing the shoefly at Dexter Avenue North and Mercer Street. Later in the year, additional work will occur at Fifth Avenue North and Thomas Street as well as driveway improvements for Seattle Center.

Tom Graff: When do the bike lanes open on Mercer Street?

*Answer: We are planning to open the bike lanes by May 1.*

Warren Aakervik: Mercer Street west of Fifth Avenue North in Queen Anne is currently only one lane in each direction. Is this the final design? When the project is complete, a lot of traffic will be coming from Magnolia to take SR 99. What will be done to help traffic get through this area?

*Answer: The current configuration will not change on Mercer Street west of Fifth Avenue North. Signal improvements will help this area, but there will be no additional street capacity. The new waterfront and new Alaskan Way surface street will serve as an alternative route when they are complete.*

Tom Graff: When will the intersection of Dexter Avenue and Mercer Street will be complete?

*Answer: The intersection should be done in June.*

Layne Cubell: Seattle Center would like to know when the work at Roy Street will occur.

*Answer: The stormwater detention work at Roy Street will happen after the summer. This work will take place between Fourth Avenue North and Fifth Avenue North.*

Kyle Ducey: Drivers are ignoring the “no right turn” sign at the intersection of Dexter Avenue North and Mercer Street. Can additional enforcement be added in this area?

*Answer: Yes, we will work with the Seattle Police Department on additional enforcement.*

Warren Aakervik: Will there be bicycle traffic signals at Dexter Avenue North and Mercer Street?

*Answer: The final configuration of this intersection will have bicycle signals, similar to Second Avenue in downtown Seattle.*

## **Agenda Item #5 – Adaptive signal control program**

Rich Meredith (SDOT) gave a presentation about adaptive signals proposed for the Mercer Corridor and other key arterials. SDOT is collecting data about travel times on Mercer Street, which will help measure effectiveness as they design the adaptive signal program. The signals will be responsive to traffic conditions and a central computer will trigger timing adjustments to better accommodate traffic flow. Adaptive traffic control will be implemented in three phases in 2016, 2017 and 2019. Having a network of traffic signals that are smarter would allow traffic to move through the area more efficiently. Dynamic message signs will also give people more information and estimated travel times.

Matt Curry: Is adaptive signal control used in any other part of Seattle?

*Answer: WSDOT implemented adaptive signals on Bothell Way to optimize traffic flow. They did not see much improvement during peak hours but did see improvements during the off-peak hours and fringe periods before and after peak hours. Bellevue also implemented adaptive signals downtown and had positive feedback.*

Warren Aakervik: How long does it take to get from Elliott Avenue to Fifth Avenue North and from Fifth Avenue North to I-5?

*Answer: We have time travel devices scattered throughout the area. We can give you the information for specific segments.*

Warren Aakervik: Will the travel time information feed back into the SDOT traveler's information website?

*Answer: Yes, the data is not available yet, but once it is, we will use that to determine travel times.*

Layne Cubell: Why is implementation of phase three scheduled for 2019? This affects prominent intersections of Seattle Center.

*Answer: SDOT does not have funding yet for this phase.*

## **Agenda Item #6 – Waterfront Seattle**

Angela Brady (Office of the Waterfront) gave a brief update on Waterfront Seattle, focusing on design work to date and the environmental review process. The Environmental Impact Statement will be released in June 2015. The program has reached the 60 percent design milestone, but the cost estimates increased significantly from the estimated cost in 2012. Angela noted that the waterfront project will be completed in phases and that much of it is dependent on the demolition of the viaduct. The \$1.07 billion budget for the project remains the same, with the majority of funding going to the Seawall Project, new Alaskan Way and the pedestrian promenade. Funding will come from the Local Improvement District (LID), WSDOT, the Seawall bond and a variety of other sources. This year, the project team will focus on developing an operations and maintenance plan and continue collaborating with project partners around the city.

Tom Graff: Where are the boundaries of the LID?

*Answer: The LID extends from the waterfront to the Convention Center.*

Tom Graff: Is the parking tax new and what project elements will the money fund?

*Answer: It is not a new tax. The money was already allocated for the waterfront program because of the transportation improvements. We will provide more information on this.*



Matt Curry: Where will elevators be installed? Were escalators or moving walkways considered?

*Answer: We may add elevators at Union and Marion Streets. In terms of maintenance and ADA access, elevators are the preferred option.*

Layne Cubell: What is the status of a funicular to take people from the Waterfront to Pike Place Market?

*Answer: There will no funicular on the waterfront.*

Marty Oppenheimer: Will part of the viaduct be kept by Pike Place Market?

*Answer: No. The new Overlook Walk will have a viewing platform and a bridge that will provide a view of Elliott Bay.*

Jan Drago: What will the project for Pike/Pine look like?

*Answer: The Downtown Seattle Association did a study that included proposed improvements to Pike and Pine streets. We have not completed the scope for the Pike/Pine improvements yet. The budget will be \$20 million for design and construction.*

### **Agenda Item #7 – Stakeholder group feedback**

Todd Trepanier publicly thanked Mike Merritt and Port of Seattle for their contribution to the Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Program.

Susan Ranf: I would like an update on Sound Transit's conversion of I-90 to Link light rail. This issue affects SR 520 and SR 99, and I would like to know more about timing, impacts and how it will be implemented.

Warren Aakervik: There was no mention of a major truck street during our discussions this afternoon. I believe that the Alaskan Way surface street would be a truck street, and the money from the Port of Seattle would allow it to be a north-south corridor for freight. Tourism requires freight mobility and we need to ensure that Alaskan Way is a viable freight corridor.

*Answer: New Alaskan Way is being designed as a major truck street. WSDOT, SDOT and the Port understand the importance of this corridor for freight. There continue to be discussions about truck turning movements, lane configuration and grade for trucks in this corridor.*

Tom Graff: Why are streets such as Pike/Pine or Seneca being funded for improvements? Are there no improvements planned for Bell Street?

*Answer: Bell Street is still part of the waterfront program.*

Layne Cubell: I wanted to acknowledge that some of us have been meeting to discuss the design of the North Surface Street Connection Project. The project will be at 30 percent design review in September and we look forward to updates.

Matt Curry: I would like to offer my feedback regarding the Seawall updates. I think there is significant interest to hear more about channelization of traffic, reconfiguration of traffic and access in the area. In past meetings, there have been no questions, and perhaps this indicates that people are not finding value in the updates despite your knowledge and expertise of the project. In the consideration of time, I think it is more valuable to hear the next milestones related to traffic impacts.

Kyle Ducey: I appreciate your review of a signalized east-west corridor on SR 99 in South Lake Union. As part of the adaptive signal control, I would like to see a camera system that can show people stopping

in the intersections. We would also like to advocate for a design reconfiguration for Seventh Avenue and Denny Way as part of the North Surface Street Connections Project.

### **Agenda Item #8 – Action items and adjourn**

- ☐ Inquiry from Matt Curry (South Lake Union Chamber of Commerce): Will Harrison Street to the west of Aurora be open during the summer switch to the bypass bridge? Additional access from Aurora would be helpful.
  - *(We will look into this. However, there is significant utility work that needs to be completed at the intersection of Harrison Street and Sixth Avenue North. This includes installing new electric duct banks and vaults, sewer and drainage pipes and power for future signal operations. WSDOT is currently working with our partner agencies and contractor on the phasing options and timing for this work. We will also evaluate any safety issues that need to be considered with allowing turns to and from SR 99 at this intersection. We will keep you informed as our analysis continues.)*
- ✓ Request from Kyle Ducey (South Lake Union Community Council): Increase enforcement restricting no right turn from southbound Dexter to westbound Mercer.
  - *(Mercer Project working to remind SPD to enforce.)*
- ✓ Request from Tom Graff (Belltown Business Association): Confirm allocation and timing of commercial parking tax for Waterfront Seattle.
  - *(Waterfront Seattle communications coordinating with project finance staff on this inquiry.)*
- ☐ Warren Aakervik: What are the travel times from Elliott Avenue West to Fifth Avenue North and from Fifth Avenue North to I-5?
  - *(SDOT to handle.)*